

Chotrim Bar/Bat Mitzvah Tochnit

Goal: The overall goal of a Bar/Bat Mitzvah tochnit for the Chotrim is to build a community and sense of chevra among the chanichim. They should feel like they have a unique community. As well, they should learn to feel a sense of personal responsibility and commitment to this group of people, believing that they have to contribute to it and be active in its concerns. A large part of this is Tikkun Olam. At the end of the 3 weeks, the Chotrim should feel like they have accomplished a lot of goals and tasks. Most importantly, they should have learned to accept some degree of responsibility for themselves, their community and society.

The model that this tochnit is based on is that of a kibbutz Bar Mitvah. On kibbutz, a *kitah* (class) of kids all reach the Bar/Bat Mitzvah age at the same time. It is celebrated communally as a group. The class is required to fulfill 13 tasks in their grade 8 year, which culminates at the end of the school year with a big *hatzaga* (play/show) that is put on for the entire kibbutz. My suggestion for a 3-week Bar/Bat Mitzvah tochnit at machaneh loosley based on the kibbutz model is as follows:

Week 1:

You should introduce the Bar/Bat Mitzvah tochnit to the Chotrim. They should realize that they are taking part in a unique tochnit at machaneh which has special elements rather than doing some random peulot and tasks. You might want to plan a special way to introduce the whole tochnit. You could also get ideas from them for some of the tasks that they will have to perform. It might be difficult to do 13 tasks at machaneh for 2 reasons: one is because there is simply not enough time in 3 weeks to do 13 big tasks; the other because our resources can be limited and so the variety is not very large (you really have to use your imagination and have long-term planning to come up with 13 tasks).

One of the projects that the shichvah should undertake in the first week is that of a **tzofit project**. This process should last the whole 3 weeks. A decision should be made among the group what type of project they would like to undertake in the machaneh using tzofit skills. Perhaps something that the whole machaneh community could benefit from.

Example: a park with swings, hammock, table etc.,

The **Hatzaga** that the Chotrim will put on for the entire machaneh as the culminating event of the tochnit should begin to be planned. The theme is up to the shichvah with the help of the madrichim but should be based on some of the concepts they have learned to deal with: responsibility, community, Judaism, social action.

Other peulot that would be good to do early on in the first week of the tochnit would be: -one on personal responsibility--the Chotrim should have an understanding of what it means to take responsibility for themselves and their community, at what age does that

being in North America and in Judaism, what does being a responsible member of society mean, how active should one be in solving the social problems of the world
-one on Jewish identity--what does it mean to them individually to be Jewish, what factors does it encompass, how important is it to them, making sure they see the important role that community plays in Judaism as a whole
-a peulah on democratic forms of governing and how effectively to make sure democracy works in communities where both the individual and the community are important
-a peulah on effective methods of communication between people

Week 2:

Tikkun Olam project. This can be undertaken both at machaneh and in the outside community. There are numerous ideas for both of these. The goal is the chotrim recognize and gain an awareness of social problems in the world and how they as a group can do things to change that. They should also see it as a task that must be completed in order for them to become of age in the Jewish/Habonim community in which they live.

Continuation of the tzofit project.

Canoe trip/Tiyul-An appropriate length would be 3-4 days. This way the chotrim learn a number of skills such as canoeing, hiking, night survival, cooking outdoors, and an appreciation of the environment and great outdoors. This is a very good opportunity for building chevre and community among the shichvah. During the evenings on the trip, the kvutseh can be preparing for the *hatsagah*.

A unique idea and one that possibly could work is dividing them into groups and letting the Chotrim do peulot for one another. They get to pick the topics that they feel are important to them and explore them in their own way. It might not work but it is an interesting method to explore. It is highly dependent on the level of maturity and dedication in the chanichim.

One peulah that might be useful to do here is one on the Chotrim's strengths and weaknesses and how these contribute to building a strong community.

Another idea that they can undertake individually or in small groups is to take upon a new skill that they want to learn to do or improve upon. This can range from guitar playing, writing, swimming, exercise, arts and crafts, sports, Hebrew etc. By improving themselves, they have accomplished a task.

Week 3:

A good project for the last week could be the undertaking of a huge mural or art project that will decorate some part of machaneh permanently. This way the Chotrim work as a group as well as contribute to the larger machaneh community.

The end of the week, perhaps as a part of shabbat or as a special tochnit erev, the Chotrim will put on their *hatsagah* that they have been practicing for. This is the culminating event and hopefully it will be entertaining for the other shchavot. The Chotrim will also have learned something from the whole process and experience.

To round out the Bar/Bat Mitzvah tochnit, a *tekes* (ceremony) is a nice idea. The madrichim can plan it anyway they want but it should include a little speech by the madrichim, a small presentation by someone from the shichvah, and the giving out of certificates stating that this chanich/a has successfully passed a chotrim Bar/Bat Mitzvah tochnit at machaneh. You might even want to include the Rosh Machaneh in the tekes. It gives a very nice end to the program and both the madrichim and chanichim feel good afterwards.